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FOR SIXTEEN YEARS, THE LESBIAN AND GAY WEEKLY

Congress passes \$1 billion AIDS bill—no confidentiality

Helms keeps protections for those who test HIV antibody-positive from final version

By Chris Bull

WASHINGTON — Efforts to pass broad federal legislation responding to the AIDS epidemic resulted in the passage Oct. 13 of a \$1 billion bill that fails to ensure confidentiality of HIV antibody testing. Notorious homophobes Sen. Jesse Helms (R-N.C.) and Rep. William Dannemeyer (R-Calif.) blocked joint House-Senate action on the bill, sponsored by Sen. Edward Kennedy (D-Mass.) and Rep. Henry Waxman (D-Calif.), for nearly two weeks until protections for those who test HIV antibody positive were deleted. President Reagan has indicated he will sign the bill into law.

Lesbian and gay lobbyists told *GCN* they feared the failure of confidentiality provisions would be mirrored by state policy-makers, but that passage of the bill before the end of this legislative session was crucial. Among the funding provisions in the legislation are \$800 million for research, care and educational programs, and \$200 million beginning in 1990 for anonymous HIV antibody testing programs.

Helms and Waxman offered totally different proposals regarding confidentiality. Helms argued that physicians should be required by law to inform the sexual contacts of a person who tests HIV antibody positive. Waxman insisted on penalties for doctors or health officials who disclosed test results. The final compromise bill does not mention confidentiality or disclosure penalties, but allows for anonymous testing. Robert Bray, a lobbyist for the Human Rights Campaign Fund, said the compromise bill "probably would not discourage" most people from taking the test.

Lobbyists for AIDS organizations expressed dismay at Helms's action, but said they faced a choice between losing the bill when Congress adjourns Oct. 21 or striking a compromise with Helms. "It's better than nothing," said Lynn Vance of the National AIDS Network, a coalition of AIDS care and service provider organizations. "I am especially disappointed the confidentiality provision lost out. It is essential to fighting this disease. People need protection in order to come forward for testing." Vance vowed the confidentiality provision would be reintroduced next year.

AIDS lobbyists and activists also criticized a provision which provides federal funding of mandatory HIV antibody testing for convicted IV drugs users and "sex offenders." Bray told *GCN* the provision amounts to "bashing vulnerable groups. What these groups need is preventative education, not mandatory testing measures. Prison wardens are still refusing to hand out condoms. It's really disappointing."

Helms also attempted to attach a provision to the measure which would have banned federal funding of AIDS educational

programs that "promote or encourage homosexuality" or use "words stating that homosexuality is 'normal,' 'natural,' or 'healthy.'" A House-Senate conference committee rejected the Helms amendment in favor of a compromise amendment offered by Kennedy and Sen. Alan Cranston (D-Calif.). The compromise amendment states that AIDS and other programs cannot be "designed to promote or encourage, directly, intravenous drug abuse or sexual activity, homosexual or heterosexual."

The bill received an unexpected boost from right-wing Sen. Orrin Hatch (R-Utah), who argued strongly against Helms. Hatch is a long-time proponent of home health care, one of the key provisions of the bill. The bill authorizes \$100 million over two years for home care. In arguing in favor of the bill, Hatch told the Senate, "I have known homosexuals that I liked and I have known homosexuals I disliked as human beings. Some of them are just as fine human beings as anybody on this floor, or in the U.S. Senate." Last month, Hatch said the Democratic Party was the party of "homosexuals" and "abortion."

Despite the repressive components of the bill, AIDS lobbyists and activists told *GCN* it includes some important measures to help fight the battle against AIDS. "Overall, I am pleased. We finally have a comprehensive battle plan. The key components of the bill — education, anonymous testing, research, home care — are included. But does it include everything? Clearly, no," said Bray. He added the bill is a "first step" to build upon when the next legislative session opens in January. "I believe we will win the battle [for confidentiality protections] next year. The country has responded to a number of issues. The public has made it clear it does not want punitive measures. We will use new strategies to keep the bills away from the Capitol [Hill] homophobes."

Vance agreed, "We are already winning more battles than we lose. But it's never enough with this terrible disease. This is just a beginning. Much more is needed." But Jean McGuire, executive director of the AIDS Action Council in Washington, D.C. was less optimistic. "We're very disappointed. [The bill] is not exactly an innovative or significant policy change."

Among the funding provisions praised by lobbyists and activists were: \$100 million for alternative care and treatment programs such as home health care and hospices for PWAs; \$30 million for "demonstration projects" to establish new health care models for PWAs; \$40 million to aid the World Health Organization's international AIDS education program; a special congressional commission on AIDS; and \$5 million for Community Research Initiatives (CRIs).

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Latina Lesbians Making Room for Ourselves

Bracing for "Operation Rescue"

Right wing anti-abortionists bent on disrupting abortion clinic services in Boston will be met by an organized coalition of reproductive rights supporters

By Elizabeth Pincus

BOSTON — "Operation Rescue" is bringing its traveling anti-abortion show to town, and supporters of abortion rights are mobilizing resistance. Several feminist and reproductive rights groups have joined forces to counter an expected onslaught of anti-abortion demonstrations, due to be staged in the Greater Boston area on Oct. 22 and Oct. 29. Other cities around the U.S. are also targeted for protest by the nationally-coordinated Operation Rescue movement, which first gained notoriety this summer by disrupting abortion clinics in Atlanta during the Democratic National Convention. Operation Rescue, an increasingly organized movement with ties to right-wing groups in many cities, has named Oct. 29 as "National Day of Rescue."

In Boston, efforts are underway to rally support for women's right to abortion. A mass "Stand Up for Choice" action has been planned for Oct. 29 by the Coalition for Choice and the Committee for Reproductive Freedom (CRF). The CRF consists of the Boston chapter of the National Organization for Women (NOW), the Reproductive Rights National Network (R2N2), and the Alliance Against Women's Oppression. The Coalition for Choice includes the Planned Parenthood League of Massachusetts, Mass Choice, the Civil Liberties Union of Massachusetts (CLUM), and a number of abortion clinics. Participants in the Oct. 29 action are asked to stand from 9-11 a.m. in a connected line along Beacon Street in Brookline, to demonstrate solidarity and support for reproductive rights. A protest will follow at 11:30 a.m., planned by CRF. Over 1,000 supporters are expected to join the actions.

"We are planning to put on a pro-choice, pro-active demonstration," said Ellen Convisser, president of Boston NOW. "The on-

ly other time we've had such a broad response like this was in organizing against [conservative U.S. Supreme Court nominee Robert] Bork. We want to show our support for keeping abortion safe, legal and funded."

Explained Hilary Roberts of R2N2, "We don't know quite what to expect from Operation Rescue. They seem to just invade the community and harass women. I feel frustrated I can't do more to confront them." Roberts added that although she plans to participate in the "Stand Up for Choice" action on Oct. 29, she prefers a more confrontative approach to protesting Operation Rescue.

"The [abortion] clinics are really negative about having activist presence on the streets," Roberts said. "I'm disappointed with that. It's frustrating. It's as if the clinics see us [the more radical activists] as the enemy."

Susan Newsom, director of advocacy for the Planned Parenthood League of Massachusetts, explained that clinic officials prefer not to stage counter-demonstrations because they believe they only add to the havoc and make it more difficult to serve patients. "If we are forced to stop operating for even one day," Newsom explained, "then Operation Rescue has won. We do not want to have our services interrupted."

Leaflets distributed by CRF and the Coalition for Choice explain some of the dangers imposed by Operation Rescue. The leaflets state: "The right wing attacks on abortion rights threaten women's lives. Pickets, harassment, vandalism and bombings put all women seeking abortion and other family planning services at risk. 'Operation Rescue' is the latest attack by the

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NEWSNOTES

Quote of the week

"This announcement must be seen for what it is, a media event staged so that the Bush campaign can capitalize on the tragedy of AIDS."

— *Urvashi Vaid, spokeswoman for the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force, in response to the announcement by Food and Drug Administration (FDA) Commissioner Frank Young and presidential candidate George Bush that the FDA will "streamline" its approval process for promising drugs developed to treat life-threatening diseases. See GCN, Vol. 16, No. 13 for more information about the guidelines.*

Judge takes the gay out of gaybashing

PHILADELPHIA — Common Pleas Court Judge Eugene Edward J. Maier refused to allow homosexuality to be an issue in prosecution of a case involving the attack of two gay men last June.

Carl Vetter, one of the men who was attacked, maintains that he and a friend, Gary Seidel, were gaybashed, first verbally with anti-gay epithets and then physically, as they walked along Spruce St. in Philadelphia.

Two defendants — James Lemly and Thomas Duffy, a former police officer — were found not guilty of assault and conspiracy charges on Sept. 1. The third defendant, Joseph Lemly, was found guilty of simple assault.

Assistant District Attorney Nancy Beam was instructed by Maier during a conference in his chambers not to raise the gay issue during the trial, according to *The Philadelphia Gay News*.

At one point during her questioning of Joseph Lemly, Beam asked if he thought Vetter was a homosexual. Lemly admitted calling Vetter a "fucking faggot." John O'Donnell, attorney of James Lemly, objected, saying that the question was inappropriate and "inflammatory to the jury." The judge sustained the objection.

Maier also would not allow entry of testimony that the defendants had covered the license plate of their car with an anti-gay epithet.

Rita Addessa, director of the Philadelphia Lesbian and Gay Task Force, said after the trial, "The judge is guilty of gaybashing.... This is another case in which the criminal justice system trivialized an act of anti-gay violence, in which the court minimized the sentence, in which the judge revictimized the victim, blaming him just as a woman is blamed for being raped," Addessa added.

Maier told the *Daily News* after the trial that he was not anti-gay and that it was "clearly improper" to raise the gay issue in this case. He maintained that the only relevant issue was whether Duffy and the Lemlys attacked Vetter.

Beam disagreed. "The reason this person was picked out was because of what they believed was his sexual preference," she told the *Daily News*.

□ John Dooley

Calif. upholds law against lingering suspiciously

SAN FRANCISCO — The California Supreme Court upheld the state's anti-loitering law, mainly used to harass gay men, by a 5-2 ruling on Aug. 22. The case came before the court as a consolidation and appeal of various cases of men charged with loitering under Penal Code section 647(d).

The code states that "it is against the law to loiter in or about a public restroom for the purpose of committing a lewd or lascivious act." Justice Stanley Mosk, who dissented, pointed out that, "The majority have not satisfactorily explained how intent can be determined when there are no accompanying acts or conduct."

The court opinion states, "If an officer observes an individual lingering conspicuously in the restroom for an inordinately long period of time, he might properly infer that the suspect does not have innocent intent." According to the *Bay Area Reporter*, the ruling provides that if a police officer knows

that the individual has committed lewd acts in the past, there is reason to suspect criminal intent. The suspect can also be implicated if the officer has "information from a reliable informant that a particular individual has disclosed his intent to frequent a particular public restroom with intent to solicit acts...even if the suspect has not yet committed indecent exposure or an actual solicitation."

According to gay attorney Fred Rosenberg, the crime is just being there. But unlike other codes that prohibit persons from being in a particular place, for example on school grounds after hours, this code is a registerable offense. Rosenberg warned, "Anyone convicted of it is a registered sex offender, the same as a child molester, a rapist or someone who commits a felony."

The court opinion admonished police to "apply equal standards to both homosexuals and heterosexuals in determining whether an individual's conduct in fact provides probable cause to believe that he is loitering with the proscribed intent."

Rosenberg responded to this passage, saying, "Give me a break! I have yet to hear of any straight person arrested in a restroom, other than people who are *ostensibly* straight. We know who this law is used against."

□ Jennifer Fechner

Klan to "patrol" highway stops in N.C.

RALEIGH, N.C. — The Ku Klux Klan (KKK) plans to patrol rest areas along highway I-85 in North Carolina to "rid these areas of homosexual and drug-selling activity," according to an anonymous source who called *The Front Page*, a North Carolina lesbian/gay newspaper. The caller said the KKK has distributed a letter to Klan members describing an operation intending to "kill the faggots" at I-85 rest stops from South Carolina north to Durham.

"I got the impression," the source told *The Front Page*, "that the Klan is going to try to use this to build awareness of the 'positive' things the Klan does. It sounded like they'll try to use this as a way to get good publicity. ...The scenario I see is that the Klan will try to take credit if there is a decrease in gay sex activity or drug activity in rest areas."

The KKK has been linked to white supremacists convicted of the murder of three men at a Shelby, N.C. adult bookstore in 1987. Law enforcement agents determined the murders were the result of a plan to attack supposed gay men.

□ Elizabeth Pincus

Fenway service expansion continues

BOSTON — The Fenway Community Health Center (FCHC) has announced the expansion of its mental health and counseling services, which will include a number of new programs specifically geared to the lesbian and gay community. Counseling and support groups are now forming within several FCHC departments — the Gay and Lesbian Victim Recovery Program, the HIV Counseling Program, and the Gay and Lesbian Family and Parenting Counseling Service.

"We are pleased to be filling a void by providing much needed services to our community," said Lee Ellenberg, director of the FCHC Mental Health and Counseling Department. "Our department, as well as the entire health center, is now experiencing an exciting period of growth."

New groups include: male incest survivors group; gay male sexual addiction group; lesbian parent group; relationship issues and HIV infection — for individuals and couples; stress management for AIDS anxiety; adolescent children of gay parents; and many others.

All groups will be held at FCHC's Mental Health and Community Services offices at 93 Massachusetts Avenue in Boston. Fees are based on a sliding scale and insurances are accepted. The Mental Health Department of FCHC also offers on-going counseling and therapy. For further information, call (617) 267-0900.

□ Elizabeth Pincus

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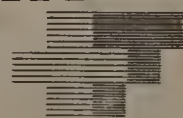


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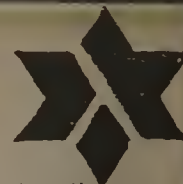
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Saundra Graham wages uphill battle for Cambridge seat

After a surprise primary loss to Alvin Thompson, the pro-feminist, pro-gay incumbent is mounting a fierce sticker campaign

By Elizabeth Pincus

CAMBRIDGE, Mass. — The campaign to re-elect state Rep. Saundra Graham (D-Cambridge) has kicked into high gear. With less than a month remaining before the Nov. 8 elections, supporters of Graham — a pro-feminist, pro-gay incumbent with 12 years of experience on Beacon Hill — are urging voters to select Graham by writing in her name or affixing her sticker to the ballot for the seat in the 28th Middlesex District. This “write-in/sticker” campaign is necessary because Graham was narrowly, and unexpectedly, defeated in the Sept. 15 Democratic primary by challenger Alvin Thompson.

Graham campaign staffers told *GCN* they believe Graham still has the majority of support in her Cambridge district, including the backing of most lesbian and gay voters. They said the loss in the primary may have been due to low voter turn-out and a focus on more heated campaigns, such as the senate race among Michael LoPresti, Robert Travaglini and Mimi Gerstell. Following Graham’s narrow defeat to Thompson — by a 49 vote margin — Graham admitted she did not campaign hard enough, claiming she was confident in her record of political successes and considered herself a shoe-in. Now she said she has stepped up efforts to increase her visibility in the community.

“This campaign is a necessary opportunity to hit the streets hard, regenerate support for the good things we have accomplished in the past, and talk about the bottom line for the future,” Graham stated at a recent press conference announcing her write-in/sticker campaign. “The bottom line is I’m more qualified, more experienced, and more effective than my opponent.”

Graham received the endorsement of both the Greater Boston Lesbian and Gay Political Alliance (GBL/GPA) and the Massachusetts Gay and Lesbian Political Caucus (MGLPC). According to Michael

M. Scully, a GBL/GPA board member, Graham “scored 100 per cent” on a questionnaire distributed by GBL/GPA and MGLPC to determine candidates’ stances on lesbian and gay issues. Scully explained that Graham supports the state lesbian/gay rights bill, opposes the current anti-gay



Saundra Graham

foster care policy and has a “solid record of support for lesbians and gay men.”

“Saundra is very unabashed about her support for our community,” Scully said. “Her voting record speaks for itself, and with 12 years of experience as a leader, she’s in a position to deliver on our issues.”

Arthur Lipkin, a life-long Cambridge resident and openly gay teacher, echoed Scully’s support for Graham. “She’s the candidate for people who want to keep a progressive voice in the legislature,” Lipkin told *GCN*. He and Scully have formed an ad hoc group of lesbian and gay supporters of Graham, which has begun organizing to get

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Laura Sachs

Boston bisexuals “take next step”

BROOKLINE, Mass. — On October 11, National Coming Out Day, Bisexual Citizens Engaged in Politics (BICEP) sponsored a visibility action in which approximately 30 bisexual men and women participated. The group sought visibility in both the gay and straight communities and acceptance as bisexuals.

Wearing a variety of Bisexual Pride t-shirts and buttons, the participants passed out “Bisexual Pride Information Cards” in the Coolidge Corner area. Titled “What We Want You to Know About Bisexuals,” the cards challenge myths about bisexuals and offer some facts. For example, **Myth 1, version A** reads “Bisexuals are really gay but will not accept it.” **Version B** is that “Bisexuals are really straight but want to be part of gay culture.” **Fact 1** counters with “Bisexuality is a distinct sexual preference. Bisexuals are not simply going through a phase before adopting a straight or gay identity.” **Myth 2** is that “Bisexuals are not happy unless they have a sexual relationship with both a man and a woman at all times.” **Fact 2** noted that “There is a wide range of bisexual lifestyles. No one arrangement is preferred by all bisexuals.” Here’s **Myth 4**: “Bisexuals spread AIDS to heterosexuals and to lesbians” and **Fact 4**: “Unsafe sexual practices spread AIDS, not particular groups of people.”

After passing out the cards, BICEP retired to a local restaurant known for its straight clientele, and then proceeded to the 1270 for a night of dancing and fun with the bisexual and gay community. To reach BICEP, write P.O. Box 639, Cambridge, Mass. 02140.

□ Sharla Clos

Blue Cross to cover aerosolized pentamidine

Company claims scheduled demo by ACT UP/Boston not “a real factor” in decision

By Judy Harris

BOSTON — Massachusetts Blue Cross/Blue Shield, under pressure from AIDS activists and Massachusetts government officials, agreed on Oct. 17 to reimburse their clients for a drug therapy widely acclaimed for its success in preventing and treating pneumocystis carinii pneumonia (PCP). PCP is the most prevalent cause of death for people with AIDS (PWAs). Blue Cross/Blue Shield is the largest health insurer in the state and the only one to provide coverage for aerosolized pentamidine (AP) which costs, on average, \$165 per treatment.

Activists from ACT UP/Boston said they threatened to stage a dramatic demonstration — complete with blood, coffins, and AIDS activists “dying” in front of Blue Cross/Blue Shield’s downtown offices — to call attention to the company’s policy of refusing to reimburse clients for AP. ACT UP warned Blue Cross/Blue Shield of their plans, and said they would hold the demonstration if the company failed to change its reimbursement policies to include AP therapies. The demonstration, scheduled for Oct. 20., was cancelled after Blue Cross/Blue Shield announced its decision.

John Dixon, Governor Michael Dukakis’ advisor on AIDS, said he acted as a mediator between ACT UP and Blue Cross/Blue Shield. According to Dixon, he telephoned Blue Cross/Blue Shield’s top administrators to make sure they were aware of ACT UP’s intentions and encouraged them to pay for their clients’ use of AP. Dixon commended ACT UP’s efforts, saying their tactics were “very smart” and that his office provided the necessary direct contact with individuals in decision-making positions.

Clark Walter, spokesperson for Blue Cross/Blue Shield, claimed that neither influence from the governor’s office nor pressure from AIDS activists was a “real factor in the decision.” Walter claimed that “new information” about AP influenced the timing of their decision, but he did not know the nature of the “new information” or its

source.

“I believe the only reason Blue Cross chose this time to provide the coverage for aerosolized pentamidine is because ACT UP forced them to,” stated Jeff Barmeyer, chair of the Boston People With AIDS Coalition and a Blue Cross/Blue Shield health insurance policy holder. Barmeyer said the Coalition supported the cooperative efforts of AIDS activists and state officials to make AP more available to PWAs in the state.

The PWA Coalition, which endorsed ACT UP’s demonstration plans by unanimous vote, was among the organizations that participated in civil disobedience activities in Washington last week to protest the FDA’s sluggishness in licensing AP and other promising AIDS treatments. FDA licensing for AP would require health insurance companies to include its use of AP with other prescribed treatments in their reimbursement policies.

In its liquid form, pentamidine has been FDA-approved for several years, yet it may be months, even years, before the mist form of the drug is widely available for use. AP is preferable to pentamidine injections, because it can be inhaled to work directly in the lungs of patients who have or are at risk for PCP.

Ray Schmidt, an ACT UP member, also criticized the FDA’s failure to license AP, calling the difference between pentamidine in its liquid form and its aerosolized form an “arbitrary distinction” which “enables insurance companies not to cover it.” Schmidt said, ACT UP is targeting every health insurance agency in the state for demonstrations until they agree to cover the costs of their clients’ AP.

John Hancock Mutual Life Insurance Company has been given an Oct. 21 deadline by which to begin covering AP treatments. Otherwise, ACT UP members intend to be arrested *en masse* for acts of civil disobedience at the new John Hancock building in Copley Square. The demonstration is scheduled for Oct. 24 at 4:30. □

Justice Dept changes tune on anti-discrimination for PWAs

New opinion reverses Meese

By Chris Bull

WASHINGTON — The Justice Department Oct. 15. announced its opinion that federal employees with AIDS are covered by anti-discrimination laws protecting disabled people. The new policy reverses a June 1986 opinion by former Attorney General Edwin Meese that people with AIDS (PWAs) were not covered by the law.

David Barr, staff attorney for Lambda Legal Defense and Education Fund, told *GCN* the opinion is designed “to make Reagan and Bush appear to be within the mainstream of AIDS policy during an election year.” He said nearly every federal court — including the Supreme Court — has already ruled that PWAs should be protected by anti-discrimination laws. The 1987 Civil Rights Restoration Act by Congress also protects PWAs.

“I believe the [Justice] Department adopted the policy in order to fend off additional legislation that is needed to fight discrimination,” said Ben Schatz of National Gay Rights Advocates. “There are still many loopholes in the law — employees of private firms are not protected and state laws are very inconsistent — which the administration refuses to address.” He cited an Alabama case where an employer requires HIV antibody testing of all employees. Because federal law does not apply to private firms and because Alabama lacks a law banning AIDS-related discrimination, it is difficult to fight the employer, said Schatz.

The final report of the Presidential Commission on HIV also recommended to the Justice Department that anti-discrimination measures be adopted. According to Bill Rubenstein of the ACLU AIDS Law Project, the opinion follows the wording of the commission’s report closely. He also credited the new Attorney General, Richard Thornberg, for a “moderate” approach to AIDS.

The opinion, explained Barr, means that PWAs can sue the government if a federal agency or any organization receiving federal funds violates provision of the 1973 Rehabilitation Act protecting disabled people from employment discrimination.

Barr said the opinion should help PWAs fight discrimination. He said Lambda receives complaints of discrimination “on a daily basis” from around the country. According to the New York City Human Rights Commission, AIDS-related discrimination is the most frequently reported form of discrimination in the city.

Rubenstein said the ACLU had recently received a grant from the American Foundation For AIDS Research (AMFAR) to document AIDS-related discrimination in this country. He said that although the study is incomplete, discrimination is “on the rise. With the vast number of people HIV positive, the law will be very important in combatting discrimination in the future.”

□ filed from Boston

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Stop nuclear waste burial

Dear GCN: Is it because New Mexico is the birthplace of the atomic bomb that the state was chosen to bury the nation's nuclear bomb waste? Residents wonder and watch as the 10-year-old WIPP project near Carlsbad prepares to receive mountains of radioactive debris from 10 sites. Trucks are scheduled to move plutonium 238 and a lot of other dangerous materials over interstate highways through 28 states. Vehicles plan to depart daily for at least 25 years.

As yet no permanent nuclear waste burial place exists anywhere on the planet. WIPP is the first of its kind. The Department of Energy has already dug tunnels 2,150 feet into the saltbeds. But no shipments can arrive until the land there is withdrawn from public use by Congress. Called the Land Withdrawal Bill, this legislation gives away far more land than is needed to handle existing bomb waste.

The present excavation project uses one square mile while the bill allows 16 square miles to be developed. In this way Congress guarantees that the production of nuclear bombs will never end, by providing a place to dump their future wastes.

Moreover, the project is not safe. Salt-water in the underground rooms will soon corrode the metal storage drums, releasing plutonium and highly volatile gases to form a toxic soup. The Energy Department admits they expect this to happen, but say the geology of the area will prevent the plutonium from spreading. Independent research shows the site is full of fractures and a body of highly pressurized water lies just beneath the storage chambers. Under these conditions, it is only a matter of time until plutonium enters the drinking water, finds its way to the nearby Pecos River and flows to the Gulf of Mexico.

Lobbying against WIPP has begun. Letters are going to U.S. House and Senate members telling them to vote against the Land Withdrawal Bill. Congressional field hearings are urgently requested so that evidence that shows how the project is unsafe can be presented. U.S. Rep. Mike Synar, 2441 Rayburn Building, is receiving mail directing him to bring his Subcommittee on Energy and the Environment to New Mexico.

Please join us. Write your members of Congress and Rep. Synar about the Land Withdrawal Bill now. Let them know that you, too, refuse to allow the earth to be

poisoned because you value your life and cherish your children's future.

Silvi Solomon Santa Fe, N.M

Gay purges

Dear GCN:

In the early 1950s, a friend of mine who worked for the federal government was trapped into having sex with an FBI spy and was sacked from his government job for being gay. Consequently, he was never again eligible for government jobs, despite his expertise in areas in which the federal government could at times well have used.

Recently this friend wrote to me in this vein: "I wonder if you have any information regarding the current policy of the federal government toward employment of known American homosexuals. In line with the program of the current Soviet government to rehabilitate Soviet citizens who were victims of Stalinism, do you know if there is any discussion of a program to rehabilitate ex-employees of the federal government who were victims of McCarthyism [sic] and Hoover's FBI during the purges of homosexuals from federal employment in the fifties? I have read that the Soviets have already rehabilitated some 700 victims, most of whom are dead. I am sure we could come up with a greater figure, many of whom died during the purges. Even if the national conscience is unable to countenance rehabilitation for the survivors of the purges, do you think it would be possible to get post-mortem rehabilitation for the suicides of that dreadful period? ... The victims of Stalin's purges were well documented, and it was easy for the Soviet government to come up with names for rehabilitation. Do you know if there is any record of the American federal employees who were victims of the purges, and if it is available for scrutiny?"

I myself have an interest in seeing answers to some of these questions, if there are any. I think the records of persecution of gay people in the fifties should be salvaged under the Freedom of Information Act and preserved in a gay archives. A year or two ago I went so far as to give permission to an organization (which declined to do so) to secure my own FBI files from that time, though nothing came of it and I am not inclined to do it myself.

I can be thrilled by reading works (both fiction and nonfiction) that describe gay life and experience in earlier times and other places, such as Ulrichs: the Life and Works of Karl Henry Ulrichs, Teleny, The Hustler, Better Angel, Rat & the Devil, A Gay Diary, and A Thief's Journal. The period of McCarthy and J. Edgar Hoover has not been explored sufficiently and will not be, until the records of gay victims are retrieved from the files of the FBI, CIA, Naval Intelligence, etc. to be studied by gay scholars. Until the stories of those victims were illuminated, the history of American gay people victimized by the purges of the 1950s will never be fully told. Even without those government records, the stories of individuals could be written by the victims themselves, and those accounts could become precious research material. I myself was not victimized in the same way that former federal employees were, only because I was not a federal employee at the time I was investigated by the FBI. Because my late lover was so victimized and expelled from the Service for being gay, I became the subject of FBI enquiry and was put on some kind of blacklist, which I know from subsequent experience exists. Knowing that I was on the blacklist kept me from applying for any government position.

I think that by rights some kind of memorial (perhaps comparable to the AIDS quilt) should be created for all American gay people who are known to have been victimized in the purges, who have been murdered, who have committed suicide — only because they were gay. I would be glad to know whether anyone else has been thinking along any of these lines.

Glenn L. Sitzman Mayaguez, Puerto Rico

No evidence of CIA responsibility for AIDS

Dear GCN:

Thanks to Robert Halfhill for his angry response to my review of The Boiled Frog Syndrome [GCN, July 31-August 6, 1988]. It's nice to know I'm being read; sometimes I've wondered. I'm glad, too, that he agrees

Gay Community News is produced by a collective dedicated to providing coverage of events and news in the interest of gay and lesbian liberation. The collective consists of a paid staff of eleven, a general membership of volunteers, and a board of directors elected by the membership.

Opinions reflected in "editorials" represent the views of the paid staff collective. Signed letters and columns represent the views and opinions of the authors only. We encourage all readers to send us comments, criticism, and information, and to volunteer and become members.

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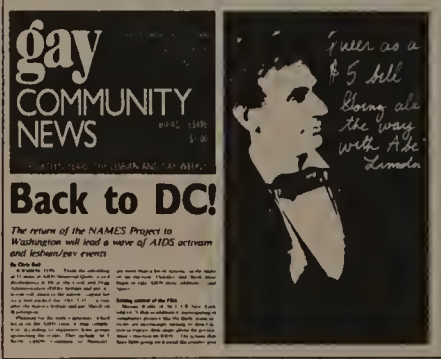
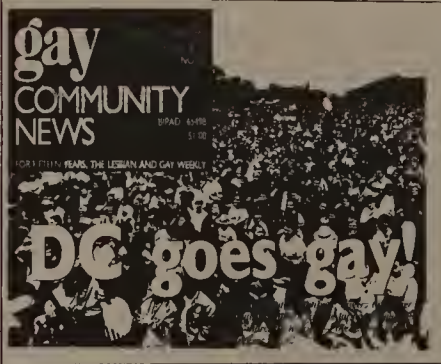
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Mass. nuclear reactors: they aren't worth the risk

By Joseph Kriesberg

A serious accident at the Pilgrim reactor in Plymouth could cause 3,000 immediate deaths, 23,000 long-term cancers, and \$121 billion in property damage. A similar accident at the Yankee Rowe plant in Western Massachusetts could cause 1,000 immediate deaths, 4,000 cancers and \$21 billion in damage.

— Report by Sandia National Laboratories to the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) (1982)

Is such a risk worth taking for the sake of just four percent of our electricity? That is the crux of this year's Massachusetts ballot Question 4 — the initiative to retire the problem-plagued Pilgrim nuclear plant and the aging, outdated Yankee Rowe nuclear plant.

The NRC estimates that there is a 45 percent chance of a serious nuclear accident in the U.S. within the next 20 years, and for a number of reasons Pilgrim and Yankee Rowe are prime candidates to have such an accident.

Outdated Designs: Both plants have outdated safety designs and inadequate radiation containment structures. Pilgrim's containment is so bad that one senior NRC official said it has a 90 percent chance of failure in an accident. The 28-year old Yankee Rowe reactor was built without any concrete containment structure at all.

Aging Problems: Both plants have age-related problems including corrosion, metal fatigue and embrittlement. Similar problems at nuclear plants across the country led NRC commissioner Kenneth Rogers to say that age-related problems represent a "loaded gun, an accident waiting to happen."

Poor Management: Two years ago, the NRC called Pilgrim one of the worst managed plants in the country and the agency's most recent report on Pilgrim management found little improvement. Yankee Rowe's most recent NRC management report was its worst in eight years.

Inadequate Evacuation Plans: Pilgrim's evacuation plans are so bad that Governor Dukakis and the Federal Emergency Management Agency have withdrawn their support for them. The plans do not provide for the elderly, the disabled and anyone living more than 10 miles from the plant.

Radioactive Waste: Both plants are running out of room to store their nuclear waste. The federal government will not open its

nuclear waste repository until at least 2003 and all the waste now generated by these plants is stored in pools of circulating water at the plant sites. With 550 tons already stored on-site, both plants will reach capacity in the early 1990s.

Economic Burdens: Combined, Pilgrim and Yankee Rowe provide less than four percent of the region's electricity. This power could easily be replaced many times over by purchasing power from other utilities, investing in cogeneration and renewable energy facilities and improving energy efficiency. Together these options can provide 20 times more power than the nuclear plants.

Boston Edison recently announced that neighboring utilities have offered to sell them enough power to replace Pilgrim and Yankee Rowe immediately. This power would cost about \$350,000 per day, compared to the \$900,000 per day that it now costs to operate Pilgrim and Yankee Rowe.

Question 4 is Necessary: Despite the clear reasons to close Pilgrim and Yankee Rowe, the politicians and bureaucrats responsible for protecting us have failed to do so. When push comes to shove, they have always sided with the utilities. We can no longer wait for the so-called experts to wake up to the facts. After more than a decade of persistent citizen action against these plants, the initiative process is our only realistic option. It's our lives, it's our money, and on November 8 it will be our choice in Massachusetts. Vote Yes on Question 4.

You can help the campaign win by making a contribution and/or volunteering. Contact Massachusetts Citizens for Safe Energy, 37 Temple Pl., Boston, MA 02111, (617) 426-5556.

Joseph Kriesberg is the Research Director at Mass. Citizens for Safe Energy.

"Speaking Out" is part of our continuing effort to provide a true forum of opinion for the community. We encourage you to send your ideas, feelings and comments to us, and to respond to ideas expressed in this space. The opinions expressed are those of the author and are not intended to represent the views of the GCN membership. Submissions must be TYPED, DOUBLE-SPACED, AND NO LONGER THAN FIVE PAGES. Send to: Speaking Out, GCN, 62 Berkeley St., Boston, MA 02116.

"The Nation" responds to criticisms

Dear GCN:

Since Scott Tucker's letter to *The Nation* (printed in *GCN* Sept 4-10, 1988) arrived here several weeks too late to be included in our exchange about Robert Sherrill's review of the Roy Cohn biographies, we have invited him to propose an article for *The Nation* about homophobia on the left and to continue the discussion there. In the meantime, his letter in *GCN* deserves a response. Mr. Tucker asks that the editors of *The Nation* "clarify their own ethics and politics in publishing Sherrill's views." As the editor responsible for the piece I should try to do that, especially since there were other people here who opposed my running it.

First a little background information. Robert Sherrill is a contributing editor to this magazine; he has written for it since the 1950s and his record of defending victims of many sorts against oppressors of many sorts both in these pages and elsewhere is, in my view, unmatched in U.S. journalism. This is not to excuse homophobia but simply to explain that to an editor, this editor anyway, all writers are not equal on the page. In my initial struggle with this piece, I began with a presumption in favor of Sherrill which I would not have extended to another writer. There is also the matter of Sherrill's style and tone, which have always operated on the edge and according to no rules except his own. Those are the qualities that make his work fresh and unlike anyone else's; they are also the qualities that frequently give offense.

As to the piece itself, you can be sure that I was aware of what was offensive in it. You

can also be sure that we struggled over those passages. Bob denied their homophobia. I disagreed with him. So why did I publish it? I did so because I recognized the review as the first really tough indictment not just of Cohn, but of everyone from Murray Kempton to Alan Dershowitz who conspired in Cohn's celebrity and his abuses of power. By the time Sherrill did his article, most of the reviews of the two Cohn books were out. Take a look at them — they are almost all weak and cowardly. And so the piece ran. I now think, and the exchange of letters has been pivotal in my attitude, that all of the greatness of Sherrill's writing about Cohn does not outweigh the bigotry unleashed in his attack on the man's sexuality.

Elizabeth Pochoda
Literary Editor, *The Nation*
New York, N.Y.

P.S. Just for the record, Scott Tucker is quite wrong to suggest that Sherrill would shrink from finding "poetic justice" in a right-wing Jew's death from Tay Sachs disease (assuming for a moment that someone with Tay Sachs could survive infancy) or a right-wing black's from sickle-cell anemia. Tucker may find the ascription of irony to anyone's death cruel, as I do, but I can assure him that Sherrill's "poetic justice" is even-handed. A Jew-hating Jew or a black-hating black who persecuted his or her own people would have received the same treatment. If you think he is any easier on heterosexual criminals, I refer you to his famous article on Teddy Kennedy and Chappaquiddick in the *New York Times Magazine*.

with my criticisms of author Marty Rubin's historical accuracy. Unfortunately, there remain areas of contention.

The sorest point, I think, is my dismissal of Rubin's belief that the CIA is responsible for AIDS. My dismissal is based on a two-part article in *Covert Action Information Bulletin* last summer, which concluded that while it couldn't be disproven, there was no real evidence pointing to CIA responsibility. Rubin offers no evidence at all, as I noted in my review. He uses the idea, and indeed lack of evidence, to help sustain the atmosphere of Reaganite political paranoia that pervades his novel. Halfhill's arguments are not much better. Assuming that AIDS is 100 percent lethal, he argues that if 100 percent lethal viruses evolved in nature, "this planet would have been wiped clean of life many times over...." I'm no expert on such things, but I happen to know that at least one other 100 percent lethal (though bacterial, not viral) disease has evolved naturally — septicemic plague — and so far life on earth still exists.

Halfhill also asks why AIDS should have appeared "now, just when we have formed a movement to fight for our liberation, when we haven't been doing anything sexually that we haven't done for tens if not hundreds of thousands of years?" Well, why *shouldn't* it appear now? AIDS wasn't created by our sexual activity, just transmitted by it. You might as well ask (and some writers have) why AIDS arose just as medical understanding of the immune system had reached the point where we could understand what AIDS was doing, so we had a chance of finding a cure for it. Halfhill's bad logic doesn't prove that AIDS *isn't* a germ warfare plot, but he still has shown no reason for thinking that it *is*. And I don't like his Alice-in-Wonderland notion (Verdict first, evidence later!) that having already decided that the government is responsible, we should now seek evidence of that responsibility. Why bother, if we already know? I also can't see giving Congress the chance to waste more time with a sideshow of hearings in search of a scapegoat, when what we need is more money for research and education.

Halfhill's point on s/m is well-taken, and I apologize for my snide sideswipe at s/m people, many of whom are literate and astute, unlike *Boiled Frog's* hero Stephen Ashcroft. I've read some good s/m fiction, mainly by Anne Rice under various pseudonyms, and I suspect that s/m has to be set in a fantasy world without real politics in order to work. I still feel that Ashcroft's brand of s/m, eroticizing macho ruling-class males, undercuts the novel's politics. Ashcroft doesn't really want to overthrow the rulers: as shown by his alliance with the handsome politician Doug McKittrick, he wants to be one of them.

Finally, I'm disturbed by Halfhill's argument that *Boiled Frog's* many faults and errors don't matter because it will educate politically unsophisticated gay readers about the danger of quarantine and extermination by the Right. The trouble with this patronizing daydream is that *The Boiled Frog Syndrome* doesn't address such people, whom it denounces as "mindless multitudes" and "lobotomized couch potatoes." I stand by my evaluation: soft-core porn intended to stoke the political hysteria of middlebrow liberals. And the notion that it's okay to substitute fantasy for facts if your heart is in the right place may be a suitable strategy for Ronald Reagan, but not for the gay movement.

Keep the cards and letters coming, folks!
Duncan Mitchel
Bloomington, Ind.

A short run-down of our talent

Dear GCN:

Hi, hope this finds you gays in good spirits.

Just sitting here rapping about 'the good ol' days' and the subject of GCN came up, as always in here.

My friends and I share your paper with everyone interested (that idea was included in your 'impersonal' introduction letter). Let me say we love it.

I am writing to respond to all we've read in the prisoner project. Let me give you a short run-down of our talent.

Michelle draws and decorates. Sam writes poems and is quite good at rapping. Sherry decorates too (she's not gay) and Mom is new to the gay life, but is very understanding to gays here and will talk to them. Leslie's a plumber with Sam and is our softball pitcher. Joyce and I handle the more busy end. We are paralegals and handle all legal work

for gay prisoners, or really anyone who's willing to at least help themselves. I also draw and write poems.

We are trying to raise enough money to make a contribution to GCN's Prisoner Project to help other brothers and sisters who have the misfortune to be in prison.

We are very active in prisoners' rights and also gay rights. I myself plan to continue on after my release.

So, if you need our help feel free to call upon us. We answer all letters. Slow, but answered.

Keep up the good work and hang loose.
In solidarity,
Clara Wittler
A151937 (351)
PO Box 8540
Pembroke Pines, FL 33024

'Better you than me'?

Dear GCN:

My name is Joseph Jessamine (Joey). I'm gay and I put an ad in the GCN a few months ago for a penpal. Did I receive an answer? No, I did not.

I thought somebody might give a damn, but the society has you believing that we are all trash that is thrown away for good. And then after we get out (which we do) we're treated like trash too!

Do you just feel 'Better you than me'? What are you going to do when it does end up being you or one of yours? Do you think you're so different?

Can't you even be interested enough to find out what is going down in here and let others know about it? We're being treated like throwaways and animals. And people wonder why we walk out with a chip on our shoulder.

Joseph Jessamine
340279 Coffield
Rt 1 Box 150
Tennessee Colony, TX 75861

Gay Lincoln?: Weak, wild and winded

Dear GCN:

With regard to your article "Queer as a \$5 Bill: Going all the Way With Abe Lincoln," [*GCN* Sept, 18-24, 1988] it seems to confirm my suspicion that no idea is too absurd, no premise too weakly supported, no innuendo is too wild, and no article is too long, that it cannot get printed in *GCN* as long as it has Charley Shively's name on it.

Was it a slow week or something? Were you really that hard up for "news?" I've seen articles in the *National Enquirer* that were more plausible and better supported. For some reason, articles that would get tossed out by any competent editor seem to get printed by *GCN* just as long as Charley Shively wrote them. Surely by now you should be able to distinguish between ideas that are radical and ideas that are just cheap sensationalism.

Whitt Pond
Cambridge, Mass.

Hurting myself would be playing into their hands

Dear GCN:

I am a black gay male who is in the 'protective custody' unit here in the Great Redneck State of West Virginia. In fact, I am the only black gay male here and I am catching hell from the guards. In the past two months I have received three disciplinary actions for bullshit. And for the past week I have had my living area messed up, letters and legal papers dumped on the floor, family pictures messed up or tore up. I have been called racial names, such as Nigger, Jungle Bunny, Porch Monkey, and Nigger Fag. And other names that make me sick.

Even though I stay to myself, I still catch hell. This has cause me to file a grievance to the warden and to this date I have received no reply at all. What I would like to know is what can I do to stop this kind of treatment. I am the only one getting this treatment even though there are about a half dozen white gays here too.

I have given a good deal of thought to hurting myself, but that would be playing into their hands. Just what can I do. I need help bad.

Sincerely yours,
Robert Mathews
50317 Cell 4-P-1
818 Jefferson Ave.
Moundsville, WV 26041

Anti-abortionists

Continued from page 1
anti-abortion movement; their goal is to intimidate — to force clinics to shut down, denying women needed services.

“On Oct. 3, 1977, Rosie Jimenez died of a back alley abortion. Her death could have been avoided; but federal funding for legal, safe abortions had been denied by the Hyde Amendment. We are here to commemorate the death of Rosie Jimenez and of other women whose lives have been cut short by the violent attacks of the right wing against a women’s right to choose an abortion.”

Feminist organizers said they chose Beacon Street as the site for “Stand Up for Choice” because several abortion clinics are located along the street. They said they believe Operation Rescue may attempt to interfere with abortion services at those clinics, though other clinics and doctor’s offices in the metro area may also be bombarded. Beacon Street was also selected because Brookline is the home town of Gov. Michael Dukakis, the “pro-choice” Democratic presidential nominee. Organizers said they thought Operation Rescue would attempt to embarrass Dukakis by protesting on his home turf, although the specific sites of the anti-abortionists’ actions are unknown.

As in previous actions conducted by Operation Rescue, the specifics of the Boston protests are being kept secret, even from participants. The standard strategy involves gathering anti-abortionists at a meeting place and transports them *en masse* to an abortion clinic chosen by group leaders. The secrecy tactic requires all clinics in the area to be prepared for an action, thereby diffusing the possibility of organized counter-protests.

In addition to “Stand Up for Choice” and the CRF-sponsored demonstration, abortion rights advocates are planning to distribute information about reproductive rights issues throughout the city on both Oct. 22 and Oct. 29. Plus, Beacon Street will be lined with purple ribbons, a symbol of women’s right to abortion. Supporters will also wear purple ribbons to “draw attention to the intrusion into our community of Operation Rescue,” according to a spokesperson from Mass Choice.

In a further attempt to weaken the impact of “Operation Rescue,” the Planned Parenthood League of Massachusetts and several abortion clinics filed suit in U.S. District Court on Oct. 18, seeking restrictions against the anti-abortion demonstrators. The suit requests that the court impose limitations on the size and noise level of the Operation Rescue protests. The lawsuit also asks that demonstrators be required to remain at least 25 feet from clinic entrances, and that only two protesters be allowed to talk to women entering a clinic. A decision on the suit is expected before Oct. 22.

In Atlanta, over 1,200 anti-abortion demonstrators have been arrested since July for trespassing and disorderly conduct in connection with Operation Rescue protests. Large-scale, nationally organized demonstrations by the group have also been conducted during the last few months in New York and Philadelphia, and Operation Rescue has encouraged abortion foes across the country to stage demos in their respective cities. The Boston actions are being planned by local anti-abortionists with the participation of national leaders, according to Bill Cotter, a spokesperson for Mass. Citizens for Life and member of the “Pro-Life Action Network.”

Cotter told *GCN* that some Operation Rescue protesters expect to be arrested during the Boston demonstrations. “People have committed themselves to non-violence,” he said, “and we do not shout. But we are going to blockade the entrances to abortion chambers and try to talk to people, offer them alternatives to abortion. We know what we’re doing is right.... We have to put our money where our mouth is and be willing to pay the price [of getting arrested].”

Cotter said he could not specify how many Operation Rescue protesters would demonstrate in Boston, though Brookline and Boston police said they anticipate up to 500 anti-abortion demonstrators in town on Oct. 22 and Oct. 29. Newsom said the Planned Parenthood is organizing to provide additional staff for clinics and doctor’s offices during the demos. Escorts will be on hand, Newsom explained, to assist women arriving to use clinic services.

For further information about the Oct. 29 “Stand Up for Choice” abortion rights ac-

tion, call Boston NOW at (617) 782-1056. To find out more about the demonstration scheduled for later the same day, call Stephanie at (617) 426-4469. □

Graham

Continued from page 3
out the gay vote for Graham. The group will be distributing leaflets, making phone calls and assisting at Graham’s campaign headquarters in Central Square.

Thompson, Graham’s opponent, is a former assistant to the city manager in Cambridge, and has also come out in support of lesbian/gay rights. He is backed by Rosemary White, a lesbian on the GBL/GPA steering committee who said she believes Thompson will be more active in the House than Graham.

According to White, a Cambridge resident, most of Graham’s outspoken lesbian and gay support comes from Boston residents who are less familiar with Cambridge politics. She pointed out Thompson’s willingness to release his tax returns and list of contributors as an indication of his forthright and progressive-minded campaign. White’s sentiments were supported by Joe Beckmann, a gay former aide to Rep. Elaine Noble and founder of the first Cambridge lesbian/gay caucus.

“We don’t trust Sandra anymore,” Beckmann said. “She doesn’t follow up — a lot of Cambridge organizations have gone broke under her. Thompson will be more responsive to lesbians and gay men. He can make a difference.”

But according to Lipkin, Thompson has only expressed support for lesbian and gay issues in order to win votes. “Thompson is opportunistic,” Lipkin said. “He’s a fake. He’s just trying to make himself palatable to gay people during the campaign.”

Scully added that prior to the September primary election, Thompson never filled out the lesbian/gay issues questionnaire or publicly offered his support. “As a board member of the Alliance [GBL/GPA],” Scully said, “I’m annoyed that Thompson claims any support for our issues. He never put himself in a public position, he never agreed to a debate. Doesn’t he take the Alliance seriously enough to return our questionnaire? It’s symptomatic of our basic fear — he just doesn’t have any interest in our issues.”

Along with lesbian and gay community support, Graham has also received the endorsements of Cambridge Mayor Alfred Vellucci, several city councilors, women’s and labor organizations, and other progressives. Stated Ellen Convisser, president of the Boston chapter of the National Organization for Women (NOW), “Graham’s record speaks of her unflagging support of a feminist agenda and of her commitment to social justice. She has led the fight against discrimination and has worked tirelessly for affordable housing, child care and pay equity.”

Indeed, Graham has consistently demonstrated support for civil rights and women’s rights, and has been a strong leader on issues such as child care, affordable housing and tenants’ rights. According to Graham, who has also served as a Cambridge city councilor for the past 17 years, her involvement in Cambridge politics began 20 years ago when she organized to fight the expansion of Harvard University, which threatened to encroach on community housing. She has remained a strong advocate for rent control throughout her tenure in elected office.

In fact, some political observers claim the current challenge by Thompson, who has thrice been defeated by Graham in previous House races, centers on the issue of rent control. Graham backers say that Thompson’s campaign is based on his anti-rent control stance. White and Beckmann disagree, claiming that Thompson is fully accountable to his stated pro-rent control position.

“I think this [the Thompson challenge] is all about economics, between the haves and the have-nots,” Graham told the *Cambridge Chronicle* in an interview last month. “It comes down to the issue between pro-rent control and anti-rent control.”

According to Michael Albano, Graham’s press secretary, the election results in the 28th Middlesex hinge on educating voters about how to vote for Graham by sticker or write-in. Since Thompson will be the only candidate with his name on the ballot (there is no Republican challenger), voters for Graham must write-in her name or attach a sticker with her name on it to the ballot. “Stick, don’t punch,” urge Graham campaign staffers. □



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Dykes to Watch Out For



AIDS bill

Continued from page 1

which conduct clinical trials of promising AIDS treatments in conjunction with PWAs and their physicians.

Stephen Beck, executive director of the National Association of People with AIDS (NAPWA), told *GCN* that many of the bill's provisions represent a new trend in AIDS legislation toward supporting community-based service provision and health care efforts. He said that home care allows PWAs more personal care and is more cost-effective than hospital care. He also said "demonstration projects," which allow communities to set up experimental health care models based on their particular needs, are also a step in the right direction. "This will help communities prepare to take care of PWAs. With increasing case loads, there will be increasing burdens on health care systems. We need new ways to provide care," said Beck.

Tom Hannon, executive director of Community Research Initiative in New York, also praised the allocation of funds to community-based organizations. He said he expects his organization to receive a large portion of the \$5 million allocated for community-based research programs. New York's CRI is currently collecting data from over 300 experimental drug trials with "hundreds" of participants, said Hannon. "We can do work that no one else is doing and I am glad we are getting some recognition for it," said Hannon. He added he thought that Congress was beginning to better understand what needs to be done to fight AIDS.

Hannon credits both the Presidential Commission on HIV and ACT NOW (AIDS Coalition to Network, Organize and Win) for pressuring Congress to fund community groups. He said several members of the commission told him CRI's work represent the "American way" because they do not wait for the government to respond to a crisis. The report issued by the commission in July called for federal support of CRIs.

According to Hannon, ACT NOW, a national network of AIDS activist groups, has also made the point to Congress that the AIDS crisis calls for more than "business as usual. They have demanded that the government stop dragging its feet. They have made it clear this is a special climate that demands a special response. The government is now much less likely to take a month to get back

to us." He said that although New York's CRI is a non-political organization, it shares a similar "philosophy" with ACT NOW — "keeping people alive." □ filed from Boston

Oprah

Continued from back page

asked for a volunteer from the audience to have her makeup removed, audience members gave him an incredulous look of horror. Then when a woman actually had hers removed and she didn't look like she was from Mars, they protested that she wasn't the type who *really* needs makeup.

There were a few supporters in the audience, including a 53-year-old woman who had never worn makeup because she just couldn't be bothered. Much to Ann's dismay, Phil talked this woman into a quick make over by studio artists. Of course the audience, including the woman's husband, cheered at the new look. Also in support were two teenage women who expressed their admiration for the non-makeup wearers, citing the pressures they feel to wear makeup.

But when Jennifer, the panelist who had never worn makeup, tried to talk about women being taught to hate their bodies, she was ignored by the audience. And when she cited plastic surgery, liposuction (a life-threatening operation designed for weight loss), anorexia and bulimia, she was rudely interrupted by Phil. "These people do not have bulimia [or] anorexia," he told her.

Phil's response to Jennifer symbolizes the main problem with *Donahue* and *The Oprah Winfrey Show*, and probably explains why I feel so removed from these programs no matter who is featured. That problem is that the panelists are seen as "others." The studio and home audience members are the "normal" ones with not a shred of anorexia, bulimia, or homosexuality among them. The audience members are encouraged to be voyeurs, and are rarely challenged to examine their own sexuality or behaviors. At best, the shows may sometimes foster a more liberal sense of the world, in which the audience recognizes the variety "out there." At worst, audience members' own sense of normality is reinforced and all those lesbian, gay, transvestites, and former drug addicts are seen as aberrations — sickos and weirdos who live on the TV screen and other far-off places. □

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Compañeras: Latina Lesbians (An anthology)

Compiled and edited by
Juanita Ramos
Latina Lesbian History Project, NY, NY, 1987
\$8.95 paper, 265pp.

By Vanessa Nemeth

Like many of the women whose oral histories appear in *Compañeras*, I prefer to "tell" my story. Writing has always seemed alien to me, and as editor Juanita Ramos points out, we Latinas come from a spoken history. So, this discussion about the book is based on a taped conversation.

The lesbians represented in it — Puerto-riqueñas, Chicanas, Cubanas, Chilenas, Hondureñas, Brasileñas, Colombianas, Argentinas, Peruanas, and Nicaragüenses — are the people I wish I had met when I was trying to come out. They are the friends I wish I had had, the women I fantasized about. All together they give me a sense of what a real home would feel like, which is the main thing I'm striving for in my life and why I relate to this book so much. *Compañeras* is really all about making that home, a place where we can take off our shoes and sit down under the tree.

In addition to the oral histories, this collection includes poems, essays, interviews, short stories and art. Most of the pieces are in English, some are in Spanish, others are in Spanglish. As far as I know, *Compañeras* is the first published anthology by and for Latina lesbians.

Finding Home

Chilean writer Mariana Romo-Carmona says in her introduction to the book, "As Latina lesbians, sometimes we live in a suspended state, without a name, finding no reflection of ourselves." This is one of the biggest issues in *Compañeras* and describes exactly how I often feel, "suspended" between worlds that won't accept all of me. I never knew any lesbians in Puerto Rico, where I grew up with a Black Puerto Rican mother and a Hungarian father. I wasn't out because I felt I would not be a Latina if I was a dyke. Mariana puts it this way: "Being a lesbian is by definition an act of treason against our cultural values." I particularly felt it would be an act of treason because I was involved for awhile in the pro-independence movement, where homosexuality is seen as something for the bourgeoisie, this disease you get from the colonizing forces.

So then I came to the U.S. — 11 years ago when I was 23 — and after a year in school in upstate New York I met my first woman lover, Beth. She was white. At that point, as Black Puerto-riqueña Julia Pérez says in her oral history titled "I'm from Humacao," "I was having fun being a lesbian, [but] I was having a hard time being Latina." That's exactly how it was. It was so fun to be fucking day in and day out. At last, I was a lesbian! I was a lesbian! I wanted to eat pussy! I wanted to fuck! Yayay! Yay! But then after awhile, I realized that I had totally closed myself off from the handful of Latinos on campus who were all my friends. The minute I started fucking, I was not part of their group anymore. I could say I brought it on myself because I didn't talk to them anymore, but they knew what was going on and they didn't talk to me either.

For a long time after that, I was really cut off from other Latinos here. And, it's just



Latina Lesbians Making Room for Ourselves

the weirdest thing to go to school every day, to work every day, out to the movies and there is no one there who could sit down and chat like you did with your friends back home. They are just no way like you. They didn't grow up eating the foods you ate, they didn't grow up watching TV the way you did — watching the mostly American TV shows with Spanish dubbing so that you get used to these mouths moving over here and the words are out of step. They didn't grow up seeing the really old Mexican and Argentinian love movies, with the Mariachis going in the background. It's a lot of little things. Like you turn around a corner in Puerto Rico and expect to find piragueros selling the piraguas — shaved ice — and you pick a flavor. It's just so different. So then, what I did and what a lot of us do is try to fit ourselves into what's there. But it doesn't work.

My favorite quote in the whole book is from Chicana writer Gloria Evangelina Anzaldúa, who really sums up the whole issue of that place to call home in her poem "Del otro lado" [The other side]. "In all lands alien, nowhere citizen./Away, she went away/but each place she went/pushed her to the other side, al otro lado." She's talking about looking for that magical place, where no part of you is stifled. It's like the Promised Land, this mythical home — Oh, I'm home. But where the hell is it going to be? I'm always wondering.

For myself, if I can't have Puerto Rico, I want a place that at least looks like home — but it's funny because the thing that I remember about home is the look of old San Juan and the look of old San Juan is colonial Spain — the faces are the brown faces of my people, and the language and the smells, the plants, the color in the sky, the rain — all those things that make you feel like you're home, the sounds of the little critters at night. But as Anzaldúa says, each place she went pushed her to the other side, and that is so true — it makes me feel like crying.

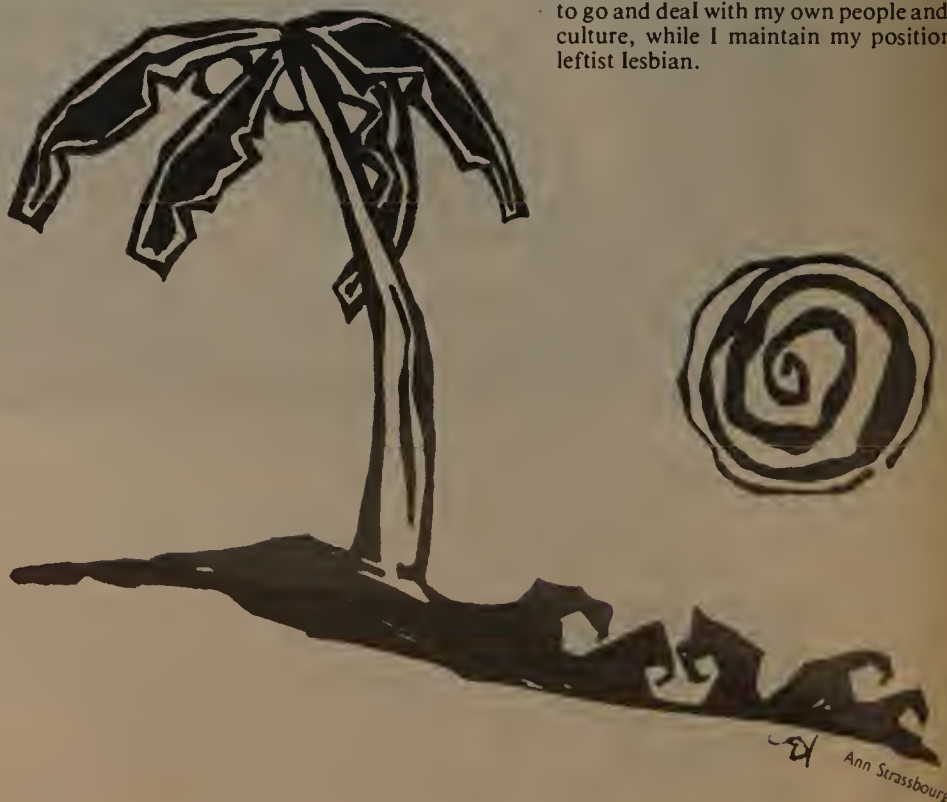
It's happened to me so many times. For example, I've been to gay meetings where white gay people tried to make me choose gay stuff over the rest of me and I felt pushed out. Not because I was actually pushed out, but because I felt so offended. So the offense pushed me out. At the moment, I'm working with a group doing advocacy and providing services for Latinos, and there I'm repressing my lesbianism. Part of me thinks it's going to happen again, I'm going to be pushed to the other side. Hecha pa'ja, chica. Hecha pa'ja. [Move over girl.] So, you know, there are these different forces out there that never let you plant your ass on the sidewalk.

A lot of the stories in *Compañeras* are variations on this same kind of thing. For example, there's an oral history by Tiana Arruda, who is "carioca," born and raised in Río de Janeiro, now living in the U.S. In "How Can I Live a Life of Lies?" she says,

I always feel like I'm a person split into segments. When I'm here [in the U.S.] I live one segment only, when I'm there [in Brazil], I live another. I want to be a whole person, but I have not found the way to do that yet. I fantasize about living in Brazil, but at the same time I am afraid of what I would have to do to survive as a lesbian.

Then there's another story on the same theme called "Me siento marginada." [I feel marginalized.] It's an oral history by a Peruvian woman, and good for her, she's going back to Peru. Lucrecia says, and I'm translating,

It's really hard for me to maintain my culture [in the U.S.]. I am going to go back to Peru in a month and check out the situation. It might be hard, but I think I prefer to go and deal with my own people and my culture, while I maintain my position of leftist lesbian.



Ann Strassbourg

While she lived here she worked on the struggles of Nicaragua and El Salvador and then she started thinking, but what about Peru? — when is all of this going to move down to South America? She doesn't want to wait, she wants to go deal with it now.

Avoteja, who was raised in Spanish Harlem, also deals with trying to be whole in her oral history called "What they see is what they get":

I'm not only a lesbian, but also a Rican who happens to be a Black woman. If they want me, they have to take all of me. What they see is what they get! They can't make me up and chop me into whatever. I'm not a piece of material.

A story that is the opposite of my experience, but also talks about being all the parts of who you are is "Bayamón, Brooklyn y Yo." It's by Juanita Ramos, who is a Black Puerto Rican. She was born on the island and came here when she was



Vanessa and Mita (her grandmother) in Mayaguez, Puerto Rico, 1978

eight years old. But then she went back to Puerto Rico to visit and it was there that she met lesbians. She says "Puerto Rico was the only place I had gotten to know any lesbians and so I moved there full of hopes and dreams." When I read this I was thinking, where were you, who did you meet, how did you do that, how come I didn't see you? I was so isolated, I didn't have the foggiest idea what a lesbian looked like. And here was this woman right there, we probably walked by each other and I didn't know it.

She was involved in political stuff in Puerto Rico, too. And here we have a lot in common. She says,

The more I identified as a radical, the more I felt alienated from myself as a lesbian. The Cuban Revolution, which at the time was the model of all Latin American revolutionaries in 'good standing' said that people like me were bourgeois counter-revolutionaries. The Puerto Rican male-dominated left...told me that I was sick for being a 'homosexual.'...Yet, the Puerto Rican left was the only place I knew where I could turn to for support as a Puerto Rican.

Though I was barely aware of the growing Feminist Movement, I felt the traditional Left prejudice towards feminism; that it was a white middle-class women's movement which divided the struggle of the masses along gender lines. I felt Puerto Ricans could not afford one more division in our struggle for national liberation.

I heard the same line about gay issues and my feelings about feminism were very similar to Juanita's. At the same time, I used to go bullshit about the way the men in the movement treated the women. I remember once when a woman friend of mine went to a meeting on a Saturday. The guys start talking and then they quickly dispatch the women to make some arroz con pollo for lunch. Afterwards, my friend told me, "We went to the kitchen and made arroz con pollo and the pendejos [jerks] were out there scratching their balls and talking politics." But it kind of struck her afterwards. We were becoming aware of sexism, but we weren't aware of the feminist movement.

Another story that talks about the left in Puerto Rico and its attitude toward queers is "Tenemos que bregar" (We have to deal). It's by Esther, a Black Puerto Rican born and raised on the island who now lives in New York. She was involved in a feminist group with lesbians in it in Puerto Rico; its main thing was to fight for free love and against the oppression of women and of the poor and working classes. She says that the left movement leaders tend to think that el pueblo aren't going to accept queers, so they can't risk fighting for gay rights because they are going to alienate the people they want to have in the party. But Esther says she lived for awhile in the cantera, which is a very poor barrio in Puerto Rico and there people had no trouble socializing with the transvestites who used to come out at night

to do their ronda — cruising. So maybe it's the movement leaders who have the problem after all, not el pueblo.

Racism Where You Live

Racism in families is another issue that has to do with not feeling home any place. A number of women in *Compañeras* talk about it and I've experienced it in my own family. Avoteja says,

We lived in a continuous race war. All the racial stereotypes were played out at home. You know, the darker you were the more stupid you were supposed to be, the more violent, the louder. And of course, you were supposed to grow up and marry the lightest person you could find so that you would "improve the race."

That is exactly what happened to my mom. She was the darkest, the oldest and she also committed this sin of not being born a boy, so she was abused and she didn't get to go to college. She was the darkest one and her family shat on her. My aunt, who was the lightest, and the youngest, was sent to Catholic school; she got an education and my mother was never able to be what she wanted to be. Mostly it was because of color.

Julia Pérez talks about racism from her white lover. Julia was involved with a coalition of Black and Puerto Rican teachers and students during the '60s. She says her lover "couldn't understand what I was doing. She was from the Midwest and she had her own little brand of racism. She wanted to know why I was with *those* Black people." On both sides of my own family I've heard people talk about shades of color and *those* people. There are good Black people and then there are *those Black people*. Usually, it has to do with the fact that they're poor, or slightly darker than other Black people, and being more poor, they might be less educated.

Another story I can really relate to and that deals with racism in your family is called "I had a Choice." It's by Pat Lichty-Urbe — she has a Mexican mother and a Pennsylvania Dutch father who comes from a working class family. My father comes from a working class or actually poor Hungarian family from New Jersey and as I said earlier my mother is Black and Puerto Rican. She also came from a poor family. Pat talks about becoming conscious of the racism of her father's family toward her mother and her brothers and sisters and I know exactly what she's talking about. It's something that can totally fuck you up because you could end up taking sides. At least I was already in college when my father's family started pulling stuff and by that time I knew exactly where they were coming from. Actually, it still messed me up — because it wasn't like I fought back. I didn't say, "Oh yeah, you're right" either; I just let them hurt me.

I remember one time in particular when I was watching the news with my Hungarian relatives in New Jersey and there was something about some fights or shoot-out in the Bronx, in the Puerto Rican section in New York, in el barrio. My aunt and uncle said something like "The goddamn spics are wrecking the city." And there I am, fresh from Puerto Rico, just a couple of months in this country. I couldn't talk, I didn't know what to say. Here I am staying with these people who on the one side are putting money in my pocket, supposedly trying to help me out with college, but the message is "Here, take this money, but let us shit on you first."

Poverty and Violence

A lot of the stories in *Compañeras* talk about poverty. And they have to do with the history of so many people, including my parents'. For example, Julia Pérez says,

When my mother married my stepfather she brought the other kids from Puerto Rico, and we went to live in Prospect St. [in New York] in one room. We were really, really poor...I mean, I went hungry a lot. My stepfather would go and sell blood so we could eat. And sometimes when my mother didn't have anything to feed us she would make maicena, corn starch, but she would make it without the milk so that all you had was starch. I remember seeing my mother sit down on the bed and cry because that was all we had to eat.

My family wasn't quite that poor — but this story touches on how people think they're going to make a better life in the U.S. Julia's parents didn't find much when they came here and neither did my parents. You find a lot of shit is what you find. My father stayed for awhile and my mother went back and that just added to her humiliation. They couldn't find a home in the U.S. because he was white and she was Black — and there was no room for them here. There wasn't a single house they could find in all of New Jersey and New York.

"I am the Lost Daughter of My Mama's



Mariana Romo-Carmona

House" and "Notes on Oppression and Violence" are other pieces about poverty and about racism, and about violence. They're by Aleticia Tijerina, who is part Chicana and part Native American. Her family was really poor and when she was three years old her father tried to kill her. So then the police took her away. They basically ripped her away from her mom and she never saw her mom again. It makes me want to cry — it's such a horrible thing. In the "Lost Daughter" story, she says,

Poverty is violence. Calculated and directed, North America means to keep hidden the legislated fates of the Mexican farm workers. My mama's and my life only two of the many stories that have remained untold. Until now....

I have lost much to the oppressor. My family. My language. My culture.

Still, I search...

I like the fact that she says poverty is violence — that's exactly right, calculated violence.

Another really sad one is "Hombre de Palabra." It's by Marta, a Chicana who lives in Wisconsin, and it's about this man who unleashed all this anger and violence on



Julia Pérez in front of the mural at Villa Victoria, Boston

his young daughters — beat the shit out of them every day. And then he made like nothing. Unfortunately, this also reminds me of my childhood; you know, they beat the shit out of you, they unleash all of their frustrations and anger on you; they're about to kill you; and then a little while later, it's like she says in this story: "Mi'jitas! Mi'jitas, come here...I want to talk to you...I'm very, very sorry that I had to hit you. I don't like hitting you." So, the next second you're supposed to be fine, sit down and eat or whatever as if nothing had ever happened — when you have bruises all over you and you hurt. It's like, can you pass the rice? Really sad.

Gabriela, Butch/Femme and More

One of my favorite pieces in the whole book is "Gabriela" by Mariana Romo-Carmona. A lot of the other stories I've mentioned are very painful and remind me too much of my own life; this cuento or story is something that never happened to me, but that I wish had — a fantasy. It probably happened to Mariana Romo-Carmona; I really hope it did.

It's a bittersweet love story about this kid who is probably 13 or 14 — she's a city kid and she went to spend a summer in the countryside in Chile with her three single aunts, two of whom were carpenters. One of the people who lives where the aunts live is this tomboy girl named Gabriela and she and the city girl have this wild time. They play to be amazons riding on horses and go to the

river and dive and swim naked, and at one point, they make love. You could just die thinking of your favorite girl when you were 15 or 16, doing all these things with her; it's so romantic. I can totally transport myself back to that age and feel that way.

Another really fun article is an interview with Lee and Ali — they're a Puerto Rican couple who live in New York. They're very into butch/femme roles and I think they're a little older than me, from the time when butches were *butches*. You put on your boxer shorts and your pants, tuxedo shirt and a tux and your brill cream on your head and you were spiffy, and you were butch and you were tough and you defended your woman. And the femmes put on their petticoats and their dresses and pantyhose and pointy shoes and make-up. (I've wanted to wear the tuxedo, but not the brill cream — too greasy!) So, they're neat and they put Spanish and English all in one sentence, which I love. For example, Ali says,

Yo soy butch, but I don't want to be a man. Si me gusta vestir como un hombre, maybe because I was brought up with five brothers and that's what I saw. A mi me gusta la mujer femenina. A mi, una butch could strip herself for me and I doubt I would move a hair. But I'm sure si ella se pone bien sexy that it would be different.

Ali is a mother and I should point out that a lot of women in *Compañeras* have children.

An essay I appreciated a lot and I wish I had gotten to read years ago is "¡Fuera del Closet, Boricua!" — that's "Out of the Closet, Rican!" At first I found it somewhat boring because it was so theoretical, talking about the different stages of coming out. But when I read it again I really enjoyed it because I realized it was the first thing I had read that was feminist, queer, and theoretical — in Spanish. This is the kind of thing I always see in English. So, that was really neat.

I just have room to mention one more piece, although every story is wonderful in some way. It's a poem I like called "Alliances." It's by Judit, who is a Jewish Argentinian lesbian. I like it because people are always talking about allies and coalition as if it was such an easy thing to do — but it's not at all. When I've tried to work with Anglo groups, there's the feeling that we're gay, we should be allies, or in Latina groups, the sense that because we're Latinas, we should see this path — but I could be up in the mountains, and she could be down by the ocean.

Judit says,

Alliances arise from differences./there is no one who is automatically my ally/because we are the same/Alliances don't grow wild and unattended/they need constant thought and care...Alliances are not accessories to our wardrobe/that we can take off/and hang up with our coats in the closet/when we come home tired/or leave at home because they won't look right/at a certain party.

I Want to See Their Faces

So this brings me to the end. I'm still looking for alliances everywhere, but I'm less and less willing to sacrifice part of me for "the cause." And, I'm still looking for home, but I feel like at least I'm in here; I'm in *Compañeras* with all these women. We're finding each other and we're getting to that place — together — and we're not going to be pushed to no other side.

The very last thing I want to say is that I missed pictures of the women in *Compañeras* — I would love to see their faces. Do they have a moustache like me? Is their hair curlier than mine — do they have freckles — are they fat or skinny — tall or short — do they wear dresses or pants? I want to see them. I know what's in their heads, I want to see what they look like. □



Vanessa, Boston, 1988

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Question 4's electricity shutdown would be expensive – economically and environmentally

ECONOMIC COSTS

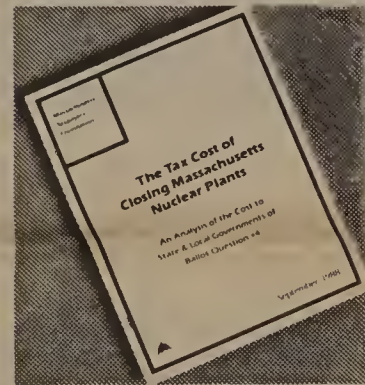
Question 4 would:

Cut off nearly 20 percent of our in-state power supply – forcing expensive power shortages.

Our state already faces the prospect of serious electricity shortages this winter. Question 4's shutdown would cut off over 4 billion kilowatt-hours of electricity annually – nearly 20 percent of our in-state power supply – and make our electricity supply problems even worse.

Cost taxpayers and ratepayers billions of dollars.

If Question 4 passes, the State of Massachusetts would have to pay for the arbitrary shutdown of the power plants.



These huge costs would be paid by Massachusetts taxpayers. A September 1988 Massachusetts Taxpayers Foundation study concluded that: "Likely compensation to the plants' owners would be somewhere between \$1.3 and \$2.1 billion. The annual carrying costs ... would put a \$150 million to \$250 million a year dent in state and local budgets for each of the next 20 years – a total fiscal impact of \$4 billion." In addition, electricity rates would rise to pay for the high costs of replacement power.

Cause thousands of Massachusetts workers to lose their jobs.

Question 4's shutdown would cause the more than 1,000 men and women who work at the plants to immediately lose their jobs. The increased electric bills and taxes that would result from the shutdown would increase business costs and damage our state's economy – putting thousands of other Massachusetts jobs at risk.

ENVIRONMENTAL COSTS

Question 4 would:

Increase oil and coal burning: adding as much as 44 million pounds of sulfur dioxide and 7 billion pounds of carbon dioxide into the air every year.

If our state's nuclear electricity plants are closed, most of the replacement power would come from oil and coal plants. By forcing this switch to oil and coal burning, Question 4 would add to already serious air and water pollution problems – including ozone pollution, acid rain, and the global warming Greenhouse Effect.

Increase Acid Rain.



Sulphur dioxide pollution is a major cause of acid rain – which is destroying our lakes and streams, and agricultural and forest resources. Question 4 would lead to increased sulfur dioxide pollution, making our acid rain problems even worse.

Add to the Greenhouse Effect.

By forcing a switch to oil and coal, Question 4 would increase the carbon dioxide emissions that are creating the global warming Greenhouse Effect – a problem which could have worldwide environmental impacts. As the *Boston Globe* stated in an August 15, 1988 editorial: "If (Massachusetts' nuclear electricity plants) were replaced by fossil-fuel plants the emission of gases that cause acid rain, as well as the warming of the atmosphere would be increased by 15 percent – at a time when every effort should be made to reduce such emissions."

Question 4 would
permanently shut down the generation of electric power
by Massachusetts' nuclear electricity plants.

Vote NO on 4 Stop the Shutdown

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GAY COMMUNITY NEWS □ OCTOBER 23-29, 1988 □ PAGE 13

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2LF seek F for sunny 3BR in Winter Hill. Roomy, bay windows, hardwood, porches, parking, quiet road. Seek L/Bi 25 plus, responsible professional, sense of humor, for friendly independent home. Sorry, no smoking/drugs. \$300 plus utilities. Call 623-5535. (15)

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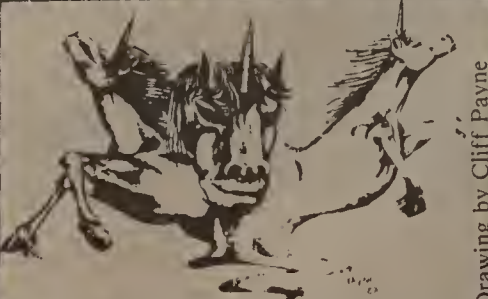
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HOWARD MOVING

Prisoners Seeking Friends

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Alexander Berkman, *Prison Memoirs of an Anarchist*



Drawing by Cliff Payne

Lonely GM looking for someone to correspond with. Loves music, sports and art. [Pris. Proj Note: the above drawing, as well as the cover of our prisoner poetry & graphics issue, is by Cliff, who is looking for an outlet for his work, should anyone be interested in helping him make a connection with a store or whatever where he can do drawings on commission] Looking for a special person to share feelings with. Cliff PAYNE, D-1728, 7C-201, PO Box 1902-B, Tehachapi CA 93561.

I'm 48 and still have a lot of the soft, good looks of my youth that let me pass myself off as a girl. I would like to communicate with someone of any age who is honest about feelings and tired of let downs. I'm deeply interested in science and inventing (I've invented some things) and in music and meditative relaxation. I'm just lacking in a closeness with an understanding person. J.C. Engle, PO Box 629 - 41692, Florence AZ 85232.

I'm a 36 yr old Black gay male pre-op transsexual who would like to meet new lesbian/gay friends of any race or religion. I would also like to offer my profound thanks to GCN for its contribution to keeping the international lesbian/gay structure together. In solidarity, Jo L. WALLACE, 21368, Box 7, Moberly MO 65270.

Published author (Pan, RFD, First Hand, Unbound) of poetry and short stories seeking other writers for exchange of ideas, support. Serious people and free (this prison doesn't allow communication between prisoners). Please respond to Russell KINKADE, D-49582, 1166X, CMC-E, Box 8101, San Luis Obispo CA 93409.

PAROLE & SENTENCING INFO !

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TS Information/Support I

The TS Foundation provides nonprofessional counseling, referral services, information about transsexualism and related subjects and job placement help. Write them at: TS Foundation, C.S. Box A0084, Oklahoma City OK 73162.

Young Black man, 30, with good sense of humor, physically fit, sharp minded plus intelligent, crazy to the bone about corresponding with a gay person of any age or color. Anthony CALLOWAY, EF-123036, GSP Reidsville GA 30499.

24 yr old black gay male seeking a penpal. I love to box, cook and will be coming out soon. Kevin CRONER, 82B 917, Box 367-B, Danemora NY 12929.

WANTED: a true friend. Race is no barrier, as I do love Black Men! Prisoners unauthorized to write here. Also, I'm in a college program in here and in need of a few blank COMPUTER DISKETTES. If you can donate such, please write first as I have to send you a permit from the institution here before I can receive them. Thank you! David R. JOHNSON, C-073738, PO Box 99 (Mail 180), Clermont FL 32711.

Bisexual, would be happy to write any sex or age, likes reading, sports, decoupage (putting pictures on plaques) and doing finishing work (wood). Louis Paul CORMIER, 100757, Camp D Eagle 3, Angola LA 70712



First of all I'd like to say that I gather a great deal of joy & information from GCN especially in your AIDS related articles, due to the fact that I'm HIV positive myself. It gives me a lot of peace of mind here in a world where they would rather look at us as freaks. May I put a little line in your penpal space? I'm a 31 year old latin woman who would like to hear from other women. I enjoy intelligent, open-minded, gutsy women. Victoria HERNANDEZ, 121362, PO Box 26, St Gabriel LA 70776.

I'm interested in any books, fiction or nonfiction that you have on gay/lesbian life. Also I would like to write someone. I enjoy reading, writing poetry and letters and people generally. Doing short time. Kathy HUMPHREYS, Box 2741, Chas., WV 25330.



29 yr old Transvestite looking for someone to write. Someone who is more the dominant type, but not into chains, beatings or pain, just a nice gentle lover and understanding friend. I like all types of animals, writing sexy letters to my lover, mellow rock and nude swimming in mountain lakes. David COLBY, 48845, 2605 State St, Salem OR 97310.

26 yr old TS ("Candi") would like to correspond with anyone in the free world or in prison. I enjoy dancing, traveling, meeting people. I'm a hairdresser by trade. Age & race unimportant. I just want to make friends. James FITZGERALD, Box 6-98743, LaGrange KY 40031.

I've been trying to make contact with gay people for a long time now, but being in prison it's hard. Finally I heard about your paper. I'm a handsome black man seeking correspondence and friendship, especially from those interested in getting a dose of my big, beautiful, black cock. I'm interested in many activities. Michael DAVIS, P-6968, RD 10 Box 10, Greensburg PA 15601.

Hi everyone! I'm a gay male who would like to send as well as get letters from other gay men, no matter who you are. I'm getting out in 15 months and will be looking for a place to work and live. Please write soon. Mark GREEN, 43006, Camp J Shark 4-L-5, Angola LA 70712

I enjoy a passive lover, though I'm not into any type of S&M. I'm just looking for a nice, sweet, friend. I like cars, good books, rock'n roll and all types of sports. Paul MORTIMER, 48995, 2605 State St, Salem OR 97310.

35 yr old gay man, into writing, painting landscapes, law, R&R, and occult. Seeking TV, TS, GM, fem types, looking for lots of yummy cummy letters. Send embossed-stamp envelope for fast reply. Tommy BLANKENSHIP, 195152, Box 45699, Lucasville OH 45699.

Gay man, 28, looking for someone who can accept as a friend a man who is in prison. Not into games. Please write. Keith HOUSTON, 18017, Box 607, Carson City NV 89701.

I would like to hear from someone regularly. My interests are reading and writing songs. I'm very sensitive and emotional in relationships. David Lee WINFIELD, 80943, Camp J Gator I-R-2, Angola LA 70712.



In solitary confinement, handsome bodybuilder, educated, healthy, drug free, and mature. Interests include a diversity of positive enjoyable activities. Seeking romantic letters and stable man for lasting monogamous relation. Keith AGARD, 83B 0893, Box 149, Attica NY 14011.

Intellectual Black male, 32. Hobbies include chess, reading, socializing, dancing and romance! Desires correspondence with caring individual. Photo appreciated. Calvin JACKSON, 06508-018, Box 34550, Memphis TN 38184

I'm very active in 'jailhouse lawyering' both for gay rights and for the rights of prisoners with AIDS. I'm devoted totally to bringing changes, but sure could use some friendly correspondence. Thomas FINNEY, 418663, Box 16, Lovelady TX 75851.



from The Times of Harvey Milk

Please note: Calendar listings must be received by the Monday before the week of the event. Photos with listings are encouraged.

22 Saturday

Cambridge □ A concert with **Deirdre McCalla** to support the struggle for women's rights and reproductive freedom. To benefit the National Organization for Women. ASL-interpreted, wheelchair accessible. Paine Hall, Harvard U. 8pm. \$17/adv., \$19/door. Info: 617/782-1056.

Boston □ Triangle Theater Company presents "**The Mystery of Irma Vep**." Through Nov. 13. Paramount Penthouse Theatre, 58 Berkeley St. \$15. Info: 617/426-3550.

Watertown □ GLOW — **Gays and Lesbians of Watertown** etc. 3rd annual combined yard sale. 9am-2pm. Info: Colleen 617/926-3440, Tom 617/923-9440.

23 Sunday

Brookline □ Brookline-Brighton-Allston **Lesbian Halloween Potluck**, costume encouraged. Info: 617/277-2704.

Cambridge □ Local author **Kathi Maio** celebrates the publication of her book "Feminist in the Dark: Reviewing the Movies." New Words Bookstore, 186 Hampshire St. 3-5pm. Free. Info: 617/876-5310.

Brookline □ Join **Am Tikva** in watching "The Goldbergs," a 1950s situation comedy. Followed by a discussion of the portrayal of the Jewish family in the mass media. Please bring something sweet to share. Workmen's Circle, 1762 Beacon St. 7pm. Info: 617/782-8894.

Boston □ New group forming for **lesbian nurses, nurse clinicians, and nursing students** to discuss social and professional issues, direction, and name of group. Potluck dinner in safe environment. Info: 617/625-7643, 617/666-1466.

25 Tuesday

Boston □ Open rehearsal for **Batucada Belles**, Boston's women's percussion band playing African, Brazilian, and Afro-Cuban rhythms. Women of all colors and sexual persuasions welcome. Experience welcome but not necessary. Enthusiasm a must. Modest dues. Rehearsals 7-9 Tuesdays. Info: 617/884-4241.

Salem □ North Shore Gay and Lesbian Alliance shows film "**Too Little, Too Late**." Followed by a discussion of AIDS resources available on the North Shore. Meier Hall, Salem State College. 7pm. Free. Info: 508/745-3848.

Jamaica Plain □ **Lesbian and Gay Neighbors** of Jamaica Plain meet informally for dinner at Doyle's Cafe on Washington St. Meet in the rear of the center room. 6:30pm. Info: Michael 617/327-5669.

26 Wednesday

Cambridge □ **Lesbian Mothers and Daughters**. The Women's Center, 46 Pleasant St. 7-9pm. Free. Info: 354-8807 (TTY/voice).

Tuesday □ **Remembering Harvey** — Am Tikva hosts an interfaith memorial service marking the tenth anniversary of Harvey Milk's assassination. Info: 782-8894.

27 Thursday

Boston □ "**Strategies for Healing AIDS**," a talk by Tom O'Connor, author of "Living with AIDS: Reaching Out." To discuss alternative and experimental therapies he has experienced during eight years of living with ARC. Josiah Quincy School Auditorium, 885 Washington St. 7-8:30pm. Free. Info: 617/437-6200 x261.

28 Friday

Providence, RI □ **Country Dance** series with South East Gays and Lesbians (SEGAL). Traditional New England contra and square dances. Body Lab, 568 S. Main St. 8-11pm. \$5. Info: 401/431-0822.

29 Saturday

Boston □ BAGLY (Boston Area Gay and Lesbian Youth) annual **Halloween Dance**. All 22 and under, and their guests, welcome. Lipsync contest. St. John the Evangelist, Bowdoin St. 8pm-1am. \$3. Info: 617/523-7363.

Jamaica Plain □ **Country Dance** series with South East Gays and Lesbians (SEGAL). Traditional New England contra and square dances. 1st Church Unitarian-Universalist, Centre & Eliot Sts. 8-11pm. \$5. Info: 401/431-0822.

Cambridge □ Men of All Colors Together-Boston presents its 8th annual **Mask and Costume Together Ball**. Food and drinks. All welcome. Phillip Brooks House, Harvard Yard. 8pm-2am. \$7. Info: George 617/266-4378.

30 Sunday

Cambridge □ **Sonia Sanchez**, one of the country's foremost Black poets, reads from several of her poetry collections, including her most recent book, "Under a Soprano Sky." New Words Bookstore, 186 Hampshire St. 3-5pm. Free. Info: 617/876-5310.

Boston □ **T-Dance of the Living Dead** with Rock Against Sexism. "Come as your favorite dead rock star's evil twin in drag!" No dress code. 21 or older. 1270 Club, 1270 Boylston St. 6-10pm. \$2.

November 1 Tuesday

Brookline □ Join Am Tikva for an interfaith **Harvey Milk Memorial Service** and discussion on Gay Rights and political action. Screening of the video "Rights and Reactions," chronicling the struggle to pass the NYC Gay Rights Bill. All welcome. Workmen's Circle, 1762 Beacon St. 8pm.

4 Friday

Randolph □ **Country Dance** series with South East Gays and Lesbians (SEGAL). Traditional New England contra and square dances. Randolph County Club. 9pm-midnight. \$5. Info: 401/431-0822.

Somerville □ **JoAnn Loulan** presents an evening of provocative comedy and lesbian sex education. The Somerville Theatre, 55 Davis Sq. 8pm. \$12.50. Info: 617/625-1081.

Boston □ Urania, a Boston-area **S/M support group for lesbian and bisexual women**, monthly meeting. Info: 617/395-4849, or write: Urania, PO Box 1486, Boston, MA 02117.

W. Medford □ **Lesbian Lawyers and Legal Workers** meeting. 7:30pm. Info: Carol 617/483-3685, Gwen 617/262-0144.

WEEKLY EVENTS

Saturday

Boston □ **Living With AIDS Theatre Project** presents a workshop to collect the experiences and stories of those connected in any way with the AIDS crisis. The goal is to create a theater music piece based on the workshop material. No performance experience necessary. Club Cabaret, 209 Columbus Ave. 10:30am.

Boston □ Boston Area Women's Self-Defense Collective offers **Women's Self-Defense Classes** for women of all ages and abilities. Meets Wednesday evenings and Saturday afternoons in the South End. Info: 617/574-9433.

Boston □ **Gay Boston**, a cable program with Candace Van Auker. Boston Neighborhood Network, channels A3 and A8. 7:30-8pm.

Sunday

Boston □ Metro Healing presents **healing group** for PWAs and all those wishing to be of support. Metropolitan Health Club aerobics room, 209 Columbus Ave. 7:30-9:30pm. Info: Brian 617/267-1154, Joseph 617/357-6926.

Allston □ **Lesbian volleyball**. All skills welcome. Will teach those who don't know how to play. Coached drills and scrimmage. Through November. West End House, 105 Allston St. 2:30-5:30pm. \$2. Info: Ann 617/524-4884.

Boston □ "**Boston's Other Voice**," a radio program for the gay and lesbian community. With host Peter Stickel. On 10/23, guest Joyce Collier of the Victim Recovery Program of Feaway Community Health Ctr.; 10/30, live call-in program with special guest Kevin Cathcart of GLAD taking questions on legal issues. WROR 98.5 FM. 11:30pm.

Monday

Boston □ **Women's Rugby Club** fall practice every Monday and Wednesday, 6-8pm. No experience necessary. Info: Mel 617/536-4943, message 617/932-5401.

Cambridge □ **Lesbian Rap**. Topics: 10/24, "Being Gay in the Workplace"; 10/31, "Lesbian Sex." The Women's Center, 46 Pleasant St. 8-10pm. Free. Info: 617/354-8807 (TTY/voice).

Tuesday

Providence, RI □ **ACT-UP/Rhode Island** has meetings open to the public. Rocket, 73 Richmond St. 7pm. ACT-UP/RI, PO Box 3156, Wayland Square Station, Providence, RI 02906. Info: Bill 617/782-9063.

Roxbury □ **ACT UP/Boston** meets to confront the AIDS crisis. Room 345, Bldg. 3, Roxbury Community College. 7:30pm. Info: 617/49-ACT-UP.

Cambridge □ **Bisexual Women's Rap**. The Women's Center, 46 Pleasant St. 7:30-10pm. Free. Info: 617/354-8807 (TTY/voice).

Wednesday

Boston □ **Women's Self-Defense Classes** for women of all ages and abilities. See Saturday listing.

Cambridge □ **Lesbian Al-Anon** with childcare. The Women's Center, 46 Pleasant St. 6:30-8pm. Free. Info: 617/354-8807 (TTY/voice).

Cambridge □ **MASS ACT OUT** meeting. M.I.T., Building 66, Rm. 126. 7:30pm. Info: 617/661-7737.

Boston □ **Women's Rugby Club**. See Monday listing.

Thursday

Boston □ **GCN's production night**. All welcome. Proofreading starts at 5pm. Paste-up after 7pm. 62 Berkeley St., near Arlington & Back Bay T-stops. Info: **GCN**, 617/426-4469.

Friday

Boston □ **GCN mailing**. Come help stuff the paper and meet new friends. 5pm to 10pm. 62 Berkeley St., near Arlington & Back Bay T-stops. Info: **GCN**, 617/426-4469.

Worcester □ **AIDS Project** — Worcester **support group** meets for HIV positive, PWA's, PWARC's, lovers, friends, and the worried well. Open to all lesbians and gay men regardless of HIV status. 51 Jackson St. 7-9pm. Info: Dana 508/755-3773.

Boston □ **Healing group** for PWAs and all those wishing to be of support. Santa Fe Hair Salon, 528 Tremont St. 7:30-9:30pm. Info: Brian 617/267-1154, Joseph 617/357-6926.

Cambridge □ **Women's Coffeehouse**. The Women's Center, 46 Pleasant St. 8pm-midnight. Info: 617/354-8807 (TTY/voice).

NATIONAL CALENDAR

October 28 □ **New York** □ **Black Women Talk Poetry**, presented by the Audre Lorde Women's Poetry Center. Dorothea Smartt performs selections of her own work and the work of other British Black women. Roosevelt House, 47 E. 65th St., between Park and Madison. Info: (212) 570-5013.

COMPILED BY
TODD HOLLISTER

The Oprah Winfrey Show. October 11, 5 p.m.
Donahue October 11, 4 p.m.

By Kim Westheimer

Sometimes it takes an outside jolt to remind me how removed I am from the rest of the country. That reminder can be in the form of George Bush telling the world that Michael Dukakis is "out of touch" because he's so far to the left (of what?). On October 11 the reminder came from television talk shows, types of entertainment I usually manage to avoid.

So there I was, home from work with menstrual cramps like I haven't had since I was 16. I flipped on *General Hospital* and saw the tag for the Phil Donahue show: "Join us at 4:00 when we'll talk to women who don't wear make-up." Moments later, after Anna was almost killed by a deadly snake and Scorpio threatened to run Olivia out of town, I saw Oprah Winfrey proclaim National Coming Out Day would be honored on her show by scores of lesbians and gay men coming out of the closet "for the first time." Needless to say, I did not touch that dial.

I have to admit I was amazed by Oprah's show. She was not as homophobic as I expected and the people she had on the program were a more diverse group than I might have anticipated. But most of all I was amazed by the people who came out. One after another, at least 20 people approached the microphone and said a few words about being gay.

I just couldn't imagine coming out to my mother on Monday and then asking her to talk about it via telephone on national television on Tuesday. But Greg Brock, from Koziesko, Mississippi did just that. His mother, who had no idea her son was gay, said that it's been difficult, she hasn't gotten much rest, but "if that's what he's chosen I'll have to accept it because he's my flesh and blood and I'll always love him."

And then there was Juanita who stood at the microphone and proudly stated to her family and friends, "I'm still the same person [and I'm] gay." Juanita told Oprah she chose national television as her medium for coming out because she doesn't expect her Catholic Mexican family to accept her les-

Telling all, on "Oprah"

And then there are women who don't wear makeup



Alison Bechdel

Will Mo choose to come out to her parents on Oprah? See this week's Dykes to Watch Out For, by Alison Bechdel, p. 7.

bianism. "This way I don't have to see them," she quipped. Not my idea of a cop out!

Michael Kaplan made sure none of his relatives missed his 15 minutes of fame. He called up a whole slew of them, including cousins Sid and Myrtle, to tell them to watch Oprah. I would have loved to tap his family tree that evening.

And even Oprah seemed in awe of Daphne, who got up and told her co-workers, "Today you're looking at a very proud Black lesbian woman."

Of course, amid all the joy of coming out with style, the pain of closets and homophobia was still there. One woman had lost her son in a custody case. Another woman had not spoken to her family since 1972. ("I figured now was a good time to tell them I was a lesbian," she said.) And Oprah herself was certainly not immune from homophobia. Fortunately, her occasional ignorant bursts were generally interrupted by someone on stage, as occurred when she announced, you "don't hear about gay couples being together 25-30 years."

I wasn't sure if it was homophobia or not that lead Oprah to give so much air time to the only caller, a man she dubbed "son of Archie Bunker." I've heard she frequently lets offensive people go on and on. And this caller certainly fit the bill. He thought queers were only interested in recruiting and lobbed insult after insult at the show's participants. He accused gays of wanting to "make a big political scheme like Black and Latinos...If they get their way it's the annihilation of the human race." He even suggested that Greg Brock kill himself. Oprah justified his air time by saying that he represents a lot of people, but I wouldn't be surprised if the call was pre-arranged — you know, the token vicious homophobe.

I expect some homophobia when gay and lesbian issues are talked about publicly. But I was not prepared for the stir caused on *Donahue* by women who don't wear make-up. When I first heard the topic, I thought Donahue was just hurting for material.

Now, just for your background information, I don't think I've worn makeup since

high school. But my horizons have been broadened by some femme dyke friends and makeup per se doesn't bother me — as long as no whales or rabbits get killed along the way. Even when I thought makeup was politically repulsive, however, I never thought of *not* wearing makeup as radical. But if the reaction of Phil's audience is any indication, women who don't wear makeup are radical indeed. (I'm waiting for the follow-up shows: women who don't shave their legs, women with beards and women who don't diet.)

In fact, not wearing makeup is so radical that one of the women on the panel was wearing makeup. (She said she wears makeup sometimes, she's just not addicted to it. And she's written a book about it.) Another panel member was a man. He doesn't mind if his women don't wear makeup, he doesn't mind if they do. Thank you very much. There were also three bona fide non-makeup-wearing females, including a 21-year-old college student, a former model turned activist and a woman who has never worn makeup in her life.

What seemed to bother the audience most was the concept that societal pressure forces women to wear makeup. This despite the fact that one caller expressed her admiration for the panel and said, "Because of society I feel I can't go out of my front door [without makeup]." The man on the panel — Bob Berkowitz, a men's (?) reporter for the *Today Show* — was particularly offended by the concept of societal pressure. This perceptive man noted that no one has a gun to women's heads forcing them to put on makeup and appeared to try to back up his argument by making a parallel with another product. In this especially incoherent remark to Ann, the former model, Bob blurted out, "Does anyone here use foot cream?" What does Bob do with *his* foot cream?

Most disturbing were the women in the audience who sparred with the panelists. One woman admonished the women panelists for not doing more to improve themselves and told them how much better they would look with makeup. Another woman said she hates looking at herself when she gets up in morning. When Phil

Continued on page 7

united fruit company & red shades affinity groups' third annual

HALLOWEEN DANCE PARTY



saturday
november 5
9 pm - 2 am

to benefit
gay
community
news
& nicaragua
material aid

villa victoria
cultural center
85 west newton
south end

live dj
all kinds of dance music
cash bar & refreshments
creative dress encouraged
everyone welcome

\$6 in advance, \$10 at door (sliding scale)

advance tickets from gay community news, central america solidarity association, red book, cambridge food coop, new words, glad day or affinity group members. **free parking** at the hurley school, 70 warcester st. (between shawmut & tremont) within walking distance of back bay or moss ave orange line T stops or capley place green line T stop. wheelchair accessible.
info: gcn: 426-4469 or tty: 426-0332

Buddi

AGAIN.

Applications for employment are now being accepted. Please apply in person at 51 Stuart Street in Boston, Mondays and Tuesdays from 5pm until 7pm, and Saturdays from 1pm until 4pm.